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Consensus Document on HIV testing algorithm and STI Case Definition in the Pacific

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It is internationally recognized that human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) testing is a crucial entry point for prevention, treatment, care and support services for those vulnerable to, or living with HIV. Recently conducted second-generation surveillance studies show that, there is a high prevalence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in the Pacific region. STI reporting varies from country to country. However there is a need to strengthen the process on HIV testing and STI case reporting.

Hosted by the Government of American Samoa, a technical meeting was convened on 5 and 6 May 2008 by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) in Pago Pago with key regional partners, including the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USA (CDC), Oceania Society for Sexual Health and HIV Medicine (OSSHHM), Australian National Serology Reference Laboratory (NRL), Pacific Paramedical Training Centre (PPTC), Hawaii AIDS Education and Training Center (HAETC), Pacific Island Health Officers Association (PIHOA) and Life Foundation.

The primary purpose was to examine and agree on a more harmonized regional approach for HIV testing. The document provides a clear direction on HIV testing, reducing turn around time for results, providing direction of scaling up for HIV testing, and also reduces cost for the HIV testing in the future.

Also this meeting allowed agencies to discuss and come up with the consensus document on case definition and minimum data set for STI.

These consensus documents will be utilized by public health staff, program manager, laboratory and clinical staff. Adopting a consistent approach to definitions and reporting STI cases will enable more accurate and consistent data for monitoring trends in STI incidence and prevalence over time.

The positive outcome from the meeting aligns itself with the goals of the Pacific Regional Strategy on HIV Implementation Plan.

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